

Community Association Response

File Number - LOC2021-0156

Planning Representative – Kjelti Kellough, on behalf of the Community Association and Development Committee

Community Association – Stanley Park/ Parkhill

November 3, 2021

I commit to the Planning System core values: innovation, collaboration, transparency, accountability, trust and responsibility.

Comments:

The Parkhill Stanley Park Community Association (the “Community”) is neither supportive nor opposed to Manchester Industrial’s (the “Applicant”) application (the “Application”) to amend the existing Land Use in favour of M-X2 with respect to a proposed conversion of the Best Western Plus Calgary Centre to affordable and long-term housing for people living in homelessness or at risk of homelessness at 3630 Macleod Trail SE (the “Property”).

Please note, however, that the Community is very opposed to the current approach of the City of Calgary in approving facilities designed to support disadvantaged communities, which seems haphazard and without forethought.

The Applicant conducted a community consultation with the Community, responding to questions and comments, as well as met directly with the Community Board.

As expressed, both by the Community Association and by some members of the Community, in response to Application LOC2020-0199 made by the Applicant in relation to the Holiday Inn several blocks south of the Property (the “Prior Application”), the Community has significant concerns regarding resident safety, property crime and homelessness, and is concerned about the potential exacerbation of those concerns through the unintentional concentration of social housing and social support systems. The City’s lack of overall planning disproportionately impacts neighboring communities, as well as the community that it is attempting to service through these facilities. Within several blocks of each other and a dozen blocks from the Property, there are two facilities with 140 beds for males, many of whom have drug and criminal histories (Dream Centre and John Howard Society- Bedford House). Manchester and neighbouring communities such as the Community are already struggling to integrate the homeless population and the City’s failure to consider long term planning for social facilities to support this population is a heavy burden for all - operators of the facilities, clients of the facilities and neighbouring communities. Social housing should not be so concentrated in one area of the City that it permanently alters the quality of life for everyone, including the population it is designed to service.

By way of example, East Hastings in Vancouver has a concentration of social supports and has subsequently found itself in a situation that is expensive and difficult to rectify. The City does not appear to have an overall plan for how and where the undeniably needed social programs and housing should be implemented and it seems that the City is approaching in a haphazard way, relying on the private sector (or the private sector with access to public monies) to direct the approach.

The Applicant offered a compelling presentation that included confirmation the Property would be available as affordable long-term housing with onsite food services and laundry. The Applicant confirmed that it was equally concerned with proper vetting of potential residents and would offer 24-7 security and adjusted its resident composition to include a higher proportion of female residents than was part of the Prior Application. The Applicant also confirmed that they would enter into a Good Neighbour Agreement with the Community and offered its assistance to the Community in strategizing to address some of the aforementioned issues of homelessness and property crime, which was very much appreciated by all members of the Community.

By way of specific comments, M-X2 land use includes a wide variety of discretionary uses of the Property, including but not limited to addiction treatment. To the extent possible, the Community requests that the approval of the land use change be specific to the intended use by the Applicant and explicitly prohibit the discretionary use under section 680(1)(a) of the City of Calgary Land Use Bylaw.

There is clearly a need for more of this type of housing in Calgary and the Dream Centre has been a very good neighbour to the Community in respect of its facility at 4510 Macleod Trail. We are neither supportive nor opposed to the Dream Centre's initiative as a solo initiative but we want to make clear that the Community will not support further applications of this nature without an overriding plan by the City ensuring the long-term viability of these decisions for all impacted residents, including those that will be accessing the facilities.